

HOMETOWN SECURITY STUDY COMMITTEE

April 23, 2003, 1145 hours

Members Present: Chair General Stanley Heng, Carol Brown, Oscar Rios Pohirieth, Jim Geist, Don Marti, Major Guy Moon, Jeff Fortenberry, Tom Casady, Mike Spadt, Doug Ahlberg

Not in Attendance: Bruce Dart, Larry Hudkins, Annette McRoy, Julie Righter, Ken Svoboda

City Staff & Other Public Present: Jeff Cole (Staff), Corrie Kielty (Staff), Darrell Podany (Council Office)

Membership Changes

General Heng announced that Craig Madsen will be moving from Lincoln and has submitted a letter of resignation from the Hometown Security Committee. In addition, Annette McRoy asked to be removed as co-chair of the Police/911 Work Group but will remain a member of the Committee.

Approval of Minutes

General Heng called for approval of the minutes of the April 9th meeting. **Carol Brown moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Doug Ahlberg. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Public Comments

Carol Brown asked what part of city government the Bomb Squad fell under. Chief Spadt responded that the Bomb Squad is a part of the Bureau of Fire Prevention under Building & Safety. They work in conjunction with the Fire Department and are dispatched on suspicious packages. Carol felt that a vital portion of the Hometown Security Committee is the Bomb Squad and wondered if it should be added to the discussions for any equipment needs they may have.

Work Group Reports

Fire/EMS: Doug Ahlberg reported that their Work Group has been meeting every Thursday at 4:00 p.m. Each of the members was provided with a project summary and justification from LFD on the capital improvement plan for 2003 through 2009. Members were asked to formulate questions for the Fire Chief, and at its last meeting, four of the questions were discussed.

1. **Should Lincoln Fire & Rescue utilize industrial standards for making decisions regarding service levels? Chief Spadt explained these standards apply to fire service, from equipment to response and staffing configurations. LFD has strived to meet or exceed these standards to maintain a safe operation, but there is no legislation at the state or local level that mandates the standards be adopted. Insurance Services Organization rates the operation and that rating impacts property owners. The subcommittee felt there was a high probability of civil litigation if the standards were not followed and it was unanimous on the part of the Work Group that those standards are applicable and should be used.**
2. **The four minute response time was reviewed and the subcommittee voted unanimously that four minutes was an appropriate goal.**

3. **Currently LFD employs 1.1 firefighters per 1000 residents in the community, and in looking at other cities, it was determined the average ratio of firefighters per 1000 residents was 1.5. Did the subcommittee feel that was a prudent goal to work towards? The Work Group unanimously agreed that over a 10 year period of time, it should be the goal of the City of Lincoln to reach that ratio.**
4. **Fire prevention through public education is the first step to reducing loss due to fire and it is the desire of LFD to expand this service to educate the community and thus reduce occurrences. The subcommittee unanimously agreed that is a reasonable assumption to make.**

The Work Group is reviewing fire service independent from emergency medical service because the EMS issues are self supporting while the fire service is tax based. The subcommittee will be discussing either increasing LFD staff or finding ways of reducing the problem. Chief Spadt brought up Building and Safety Codes and said currently commercial businesses and residential properties that meet a certain square footage per occupancy are required to have sprinkler systems. One of the things the subcommittee will be discussing is whether legislation should be introduced to mandate that any new residential properties erected in the community have sprinkler systems. If fires are kept small, a community can get by with a smaller force to deal with the problem, but if additional prevent measures are not taken as the community grows, staff and equipment needs increase.

Major Moon asked about the amount of staffing that is required for inspection purposes and Chief Spadt said that the Bureau of Fire Prevention is responsible for building inspections, however LFD tries to do a walk-through of every business on an annual basis and updates emergency notification information which it shares with LPD.

Carol Brown asked what the criteria is on how many units are sent out on a fire. Chief Spadt said there is established response criteria for medical emergencies, hazardous materials, and different fire responses. The level of response depends on what the caller tells the dispatcher. If there is confirmation of a fire, sent are three engines, two trucks, a chief, an air supply unit and a building inspector. LFD comes to the scene prepared to deal with any situation at hand. The same applies to a medical response. If there is an emergency call, response will be a quick response unit (fire engine), and a medic unit (ambulance).

Police/911: Summary reports from the last two subcommittee meetings were distributed. Carol Brown said at its last meeting the 911 budget was discussed and the subcommittee came to a consensus on improvements that need to be done. Their recommendations regarding 911 will be provided at the next Committee meeting.

Don Marti reported on the subcommittee's discussion of police substations. There are two different types of substations, neighborhood substations and district or team substations. Neighborhood substations are small offices throughout the city that provide telephone, data communication, a place to sit down and do reports, and in many cases a storefront type of opportunity for officers to interact with the public. Neighborhood substations are typically

donated space and the only cost to the city is for telephone, data communications capability and cleaning. The district or team substation is a full service station to report to work to, to deploy officers from and to have a presence in the team area. The geographic growth of the city has made it problematic for dispatching officers from one central headquarters. Typically officers have to drive up to 30 minutes to get to and return from their beat areas. The priority needs that have been identified for district substations in Lincoln are the far southeast and northeast areas of the city. The subcommittee discussed co-locating this type of facility with LFD as well as the co-location of 911 facilities in such a building if 911 were to be relocated.

The subcommittee supports the Police Department's increased use of substations and provided the following recommendations:

- 1. Continue the practice of developing neighborhood substations in targeted, high priority areas where such stations would enhance the Police Department's effectiveness and increase visibility. Whenever possible, develop neighborhood substations in conjunction with the development of other public buildings such as schools, fire stations, recreation centers and libraries.**
- 2. Develop one or more additional district substations that allow the Police Department to better respond to the needs of the growing community. District/Team Substations provide the Police Department with backup office capacity for core administrative functions. Whenever possible, the Police Department should explore the feasibility of developing new substations in conjunction with new Fire Department or 911 Center facilities. Priority should be given to providing District Substations in the fast growing eastern and southern parts of the city.**

Homeland Security Update

Major Moon reported that the protection condition level has been reduced. Nothing has been identified in Nebraska as a threat.

Request for information

Jeff Fortenberry requested that Staff Representatives ask Steve Hubka to provide information on when previous bond issues for capital outlay in relationship to the charge of this committee are set to expire.

Public Opinion Research

Oscar Rios Pohirieth said the issue of education of the public is important because if they are not informed, they will not understand why things happen the way they do. General Heng felt the best way to educate the public is through the news media. Carol Brown added that the Town Hall meetings are also something that can be used to educate the public.

Jeff Cole said that both work groups discussed the issue of public opinion/survey research and the need to reach out to the broader community, and came to the conclusion that was outside the scope of what the Committee was asked to do. Therefore Chief Casady developed a list of questions regarding specific Police responses that was distributed within the work group to gather information. The Fire/EMS work group is also developing a list of questions generated by its members. Information that is received from these sets of questions will be compiled and

provided to the Committee.

Other Items

Jeff Fortenberry felt that any general recommendations that are made should, if possible, have some kind of revenue cost attached to it. He asked if there has ever been discussed the concept of a User Fee to offset costs for police services, for example if a police officer is called to investigate a traffic accident. Chief Casady said he knows of a lot of states that do not investigate traffic accidents, but he does not know of any that charge a fee for that service.

Chief Casady brought up an issue that he felt needed to be considered. The Fire subcommittee is recommending that the City of Lincoln reach the mid point of firefighters per capita of 1.5 firefighters per 1000 population based on the average of a group of cities. He has recommended that the Police Department ought to be 1.5 officers per 1000. His recommendation is dramatically different than the Fire subcommittee's recommendation, and would leave LPD dramatically smaller than the average. Chief Casady is worried about whether there will be two recommendations that collide with one another. The Police Union and the Fire Union have been competing for the same resources and there is a limited amount of resources that the city has to spend on anything. Chief Casady is worried that if we do not recognize the difference in the bases upon which recommendations for staffing are being made, we might be setting ourselves up for some kind of a problem. If the Hometown Security Committee recommends a Fire Department that is average, (mid point firefighters per capita compared to a group of cities), and the same committee is recommending that we ought to have a Police Department that is one third below the average for a mid point of a different group of cities, that is not going to sit well with the average Lincoln Police Officer.

Jim Geist said Fire and Police are the very basic services of any city, a big part of their responsibility, and felt that the City Council and the Mayor need to do a better job of prioritizing the things the city ought to be doing, where the money is going to, and where it is needed the most. Don Marti suggested that the Hometown Security Committee provide the Mayor with a laundry list of recommendations and the associated expenses for Fire/EMS and Police/911, without prioritizing it, and then have the Mayor and City Council decide which ones are more important.

Future Meeting Dates

There are two scheduled meetings of the full committee remaining, six meetings remain for the Fire/EMS work group and five meetings remain for the Police/911 group to complete the Committee's charge by the June 1st target date. The next Hometown Security Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, May 7th at 1145 in Classroom A.

Meeting adjourned at 1315 hours.

Submitted by:

Virginia Fischer